

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1616

As Reported By House Committee On:
Children & Family Services

Title: An act relating to healthy children and families.

Brief Description: Enabling the maternity care access system to continue services to some families until the child's third birthday.

Sponsors: Representatives Cooke, Tokuda, Dyer, Cody, Sheahan, Regala, Talcott, Skinner, Murray, Carrell, Gombosky, Ogden, Carlson, Dickerson, Wood, Conway, Anderson, Costa, Cooper, Butler, Cole and O'Brien.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Children & Family Services: 2/13/97, 2/27/97 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Cooke, Chairman; Boldt, Vice Chairman; Tokuda, Ranking Minority Member; Kastama, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Ballasiotes; Dickerson; Gombosky; McDonald and Wolfe.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Bush, Vice Chairman; and Carrell.

Staff: David Knutson (786-7146).

Background: The First Steps program provides maternity care services to low-income, at-risk mothers during prenatal, delivery, and postpartum periods. Assistance to the mother and baby end six weeks after birth, except for some limited case management. Babies served through the First Steps program are not eligible to continue receiving support after their first six weeks of life, even if they are identified as at-risk.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The First Steps program will provide services to eligible mothers and their children up to the child's third birthday. Coverage for

children between birth and their third birthday will be phased in over a three-year period.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Services will be available *up to* the child's third birthday instead of *through* the child's third birthday. A definition of support services available for at-risk children is provided. The First Steps program will operate this service within the amount funded by the Legislature. The program is authorized to set priorities, establish waiting lists, and use other means to control expenditures.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 1997.

Testimony For: The First Steps program is a well-managed program that has helped to reduce infant mortality in Washington. With a modest expansion it can help at-risk families with young children and reduce child abuse.

Testimony Against: None presented.

Testified: Rosalie Lang, League of Women Voters of Washington (pro); Connie Clifford, Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials (pro); Sharon Stewart Johnson, Seattle King County Public Health (pro); Dr. Maxine Hayes, Department of Health (pro); Jane Beyer, Department of Social and Health Services (no position); and Martha Scoville, Children's Home Society of Washington (pro).